

ABSTRACT

THESIS: An Examination of Khmer Prayer inside the Ta Prohm Complex and its Implications for Angkor Management Policy

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This thesis addresses the question of how the Cambodia Tourist Police prohibition of local custodians has impacted Khmer prayer rituals inside Ta Prohm Complex (Angkor Archaeological Park, Cambodia). For centuries, people of Khmer ethnicity have engaged in religious activities inside Ta Prohm. Local Khmers have functioned as custodians of spaces of religious activity there. Custodians decorate and clothe statues, and place incense, offering plates, and other religious paraphernalia in spaces of religious activity. Observations demonstrate that Khmer prayer rituals occur in spaces that contain religious paraphernalia. The prohibition reduced the number of spaces that contain religious paraphernalia in Ta Prohm. This thesis is the first research to closely examine contemporary religious activities at Angkor. The thesis discusses how the prohibition may impact future Khmer religious activities inside Ta Prohm, and presents a potential solution for the reduced functionality of Ta Prohm as a Khmer temple that resulted from the prohibition.